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2 Bay of Pigs Veterans to Get Diplomas Here

By Kenneth Boyd
Staff Reporter

Three years ago, Nelson Carbonell and Jose Tunon fought on the beaches of Cuba.

Two years ago, they sweltered in an overcrowded and disease-ridden prison in the heart of Havana.

Sunday, they will receive bachelor of architecture degrees from Catholic University after tallying straight A averages for the final semester.

Carbonell, 24, and Tunon, 25, are natives of Havana who have planned careers in architecture since they were school chums. Both attended the University of Villanova in Havana for three years before fleeing the Castro regime.

Shortly after arriving in Florida, Carbonell and Tunon

joined six battalions of Cubans in Guatemala to train for the Bay of Pigs invasion. On April 7, 1961, Carbonell, armed with a submachine gun, battled his way inland from Giron Beach only to be captured after nine days of fighting.

Tunon, a radio operator attached to a different battalion, was forced back to the beach under heavy artillery fire. He was found unconscious by Cuban militiamen several days later when the earless boat in which he tried to escape drifted ashore.

Carbonell and Tunon were reunited when they occupied adjacent cells in an ancient Spanish fortress. In the cells, they overcame boredom by teaching their fellow prisoners. Tunon taught the history of art and architecture, while Carbonell lectured on the intricacies of religion.

In July, 1963, Carbonell's father, Nestor, a former Havana public accountant and now an official of Westinghouse Distributors in Puerto Rico, raised \$50,000 ransom for his son's release. Tunon was released the following December as part of the large ransom deal worked out with Castro by American citizens.

With the aid of U.S. Government loans and part-time jobs as architectural draftsmen, they completed the last three semesters of the five-year architectural course at Catholic U., which had given them credit for their Villanova studies.

Carbonell, who lives at 1412 Hampshire West Court in Silver Spring and Tunon, who lives at 121 Taussig pl., plan to continue study at Catholic U. for their master's degrees.